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MONTANA POST

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PRESERVATION

May-June 1983 2 Montana State Historic Preservation Office

New Montana Preservation Laws

Should you be under the impression that historic preservation is primarily a hobby, we hope that you will read this issue of the newsletter carefully. In it, we outline in some detail, the ways in which decisions of the 48th Montana Legislature will affect many of Montana's historic buildings and sites.

We are presenting this information on the legislature **not** as a reporting exercise and not to complain or praise the legislature in any specific instance. We are doing so because we want to illustrate for you the extent to which the preservation of Montana's heritage is directly, substantially, part and parcel of the political world.

We make this presentation suspecting that historic preservation in Montana is not widely understood as dependent on the scrapping and pragmatism of politics. Instead, we think that preservation is too often seen as a nice pastime. We fear that many folks believe that the cause of preservation will be well served if the state has two buffalo jumps in its care, if a local historical society reuses one older building in town for its museum, and if the best downtown business block and the best community mansion are put to some genteel reuse. That may be an oversimplification. But so long as we do not actively link the purposes of preservation with other social and economic needs and so long as we shy away from political involvement to accomplish that linking, we will most assuredly lose all but token parts of Montana's past.

As you read through the list of decisions and bills affecting historic property, I urge you to think about or watch for several factors. Notice first how many of the changes made, which affect historic buildings, were likely made without any consciousness of that fact that historic values were at stake. Think back also to whether you realized the implications for historic and prehistoric sites as you read legislative news. Can you see the distinction—among the various measures—between the treatment of historic properties as landmarks to be treated with kid gloves, or as basic building stock—with historic values—which could be maintained in productive, practical use? Most of all, just mull over how many buildings and historic and prehistoric sites are likely to be given better, worse, or different care as a result of this legislature. Then fit that into your perceptions of what it takes to care for our state's heritage. We hope that, if you love Montana's historic and prehistoric places, you will begin to watch city council agendas, county commission votes, legislative issues, tax laws, federal agency grants, and Congress a good deal more closely. For those people and groups who did just that during the 48th Montana Legislature, we want to offer our heartfelt thanks.

John Westenberg

The skylight in the Law Library, Montana State Capitol.

NATIONAL REGISTER DISTRICTS

Senate Bill 308 amended the Montana State Antiquities Act to permit nomination of historic districts to the National Register of Historic Places with the concurrence of a majority of owners and owners of one-half of the land area in the district. Without the amendment, Montana could nominate districts to the National Register only when every owner within the district had given written concurrence for the nomination. Within that framework, the forgetfulness or disagreement of a single owner could preclude listing for all other owners in the neighborhood. This very significant change will permit the Preservation Office, after approval by our State Historic Preservation Review Board, to begin nominating districts that meet the new owner concurrence formula after October 1, 1983.

STATE AGENCY USE OF HISTORIC SPACE

Senate Bill 157 encourages state agencies that are in need of additional space for agency use to check with the Historic Preservation Office to see whether any historically significant space might be available in the pertinent area and might meet agency requirements. The original bill required state agencies to deliberately seek that information and consider historic space. As passed, the law only urges agencies to do so. The bill reflected a need to nudge state agencies into an awareness that reuse of historic space can often be a cheaper way to meet space needs than is new construction and can simultaneously demonstrate the state's sensitivity to community history.

MONTANA STATE CAPITOL

The House and Senate ultimately agreed on a scheme for renovation and rehabilitation of the Capitol. Rehabilitation and renovation in general were prompted by the moving of the Attorney General's offices and the Law Library to a new building, by the serious need for committee room and office space for legislators during the legislative session, and by the building's physical condition. At issue, however, was the

Laws—continued

question of whether the Senate should stay in its current chamber or use the renovated Law Library at the opposite end of the building as a new Senate chamber. Both houses of the legislature ultimately agreed to keep the Senate in its present location, adjacent to the House, in return for the House getting a larger share of available space within the Capitol for offices for its leadership. Of the two large spaces in question, both contribute to the historic value of the Capitol, but the Law Library has retained greater integrity as a public room. With the reaching of a compromise on the issue of the Senate's location, the legislature approved the full renovation package, including funding for stabilization of badly deteriorating stone on the exterior.

LOSS OF STATE TAX INCENTIVES FOR PRESERVATION

House Bill 739 abolished all but token state tax incentives for historic property rehabilitation. For several years, Montana has offered taxpayers a state tax credit of 30% of any federal investment tax credit taken. No ceiling was placed on the dollar value of the credit that could be taken. Owners of historically significant commercial property who took a 25% federal investment tax credit on the costs of substantial rehabilitation were entitled, in the state tax system, to 30% of that credit, or the equivalent of almost 8% of total rehabilitation costs. That constituted a sizeable additional preservation dollar incentive. HB739 did not abolish the state's add-on credit outright, but limited the total amount possible to $500. The bill also affects a wide variety of investment tax credit areas other than preservation.

MONTANA TERRITORIAL AND STATE PRISON

In much-publicized discussions, the legislature seriously considered reuse of the historic prison in the town of Deer Lodge as part of a solution to current prison space needs. The historic prison had been listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1976 and has been actively managed and interpreted by the Powell County Museum and Arts Foundation. Toward the close of the session, the legislature finally voted not to reuse the prison, and instead to fund construction of new buildings close to the existing newer prison. The preservation issues involved in the discussion were complicated. Reuse of the old prison for prison purposes would have ended Powell county's successful management of the facility as an historic site. Nonetheless, reuse of historic institutional facilities is often a sound and economically justifiable decision. Legislators even listened to a private California investment firm propose buying the property from the state, using federal preservation tax incentives to accomplish needed rehabilitation, and leasing the remodeled property back to the state for its prison.

CULTURAL AND AESTHETIC GRANT PROJECTS

A percentage of the interest from the State Coal Tax is allocated by law every biennium to Cultural and Aesthetic Grants. To date, any governmental entity may apply to the Legislature for that funding, which can be directed to projects ranging from visual arts, performing arts, historical or cultural intepretation, museum development, historic property preservation, to curatorial work. Proposals are reviewed by legislators and approved or rejected. The following approved Cultural and Aesthetic grant projects contribute to the reuse or rehabilitation of historically significant properties.

Arts Chateau (C. W. Clark Mansion), Butte, $35,000, code-required firestair.

Carbon County Arts Guild (Northern Pacific Depot), Red Lodge, $20,000, rehabilitation for reuse as an art museum.

Tri-County Historical Society (Anaconda City Hall), Anaconda, $58,000, stabilization and rehabilitation for reuse as historical society offices, museum, and art gallery.

Helena Civic Center (Algeria Shrine Temple), $10,000, acoustical improvements.

Paris Gibson Square (Great Falls Central High School), Great Falls, $50,000, challenge grant for an elevator to provide handicapped access.

Conrad Public Library (Conrad City Hall), $2,000, rehabilitation of public auditorium.

Gallatin County Historical Society (Gallatin County Jail), Bozeman, $20,000, rehabilitation for reuse as a museum.

St. Mary's Mission, Stevensville, $7,500, stabilization and restoration.

Stevensville Historical Society (Fort Owen), Stevensville, $30,000, site work, restoration of East Barracks, protection of archaeological sites.

STATE AGENCY OFFICE AND MANAGEMENT SPACE

The State of Montana is the landlord of many buildings with historic and architectural value which are also used by state agencies for offices, operation of institutional facilities, and university classroom and housing space. Although we do not have a final list of all the legislative decisions that pertain to the state's role as property manager, this is a good start.

The Legislature did fund construction in Helena of new office space for the State Department of Natural Resources and Conservation. The new building will adjoin the existing state government complex. DNRC is currently housed in rented buildings, some of which have historic value, close to downtown Helena. In making its decision, the legislature listened to Helenans who advocated the continued lease or purchase and rehabilitation of the existing office space as a cheaper alternative and one more beneficial to Helena's development.

Institutional facilities operated by the Department of Institutions were hotly debated throughout the session. Recommendations for combining institutions were discussed with special intensity. Virtually all of the combinations considered would have effected, or will result in, abandonment of some historic or architecturally significant property, reuse of other now-abandoned historically valuable space, or new construction. In the end, the Legislature did not approve abandonment of Mountain View School for Girls or the Boulder facility. While services and management will now be shared between Galen and Warm Springs, major shifts in population should not occur.

STATE AGENCY PRESERVATION RESPONSIBILITIES

Senate Bill 246 clarifies and strengthens the state's previous requirement to be a good steward of historic and prehistoric resources on state-owned land. Previously, the State Antiquities Act directed state agencies to have policies or procedures for consideration of cultural resources on state property, but offered no penalties or alternatives if they did not have those policies or procedures. This amendment to the State Antiquities Act made three changes: (1) state agencies are now required to write regulations for the consideration of historic and prehistoric properties on state-owned land; (2) the Montana Historical Society now has authority to write "model" regulations for state agency care of cultural resources; and (3) state agencies must now adhere either to cultural resource regulations that they have written or to those written by the Society. This amendment also takes effect on October 1, 1983, and should result in a system for state agency care of cultural resources that is more predictable and visible for a variety of Montanans.

STATE PARK SYSTEM

The Legislature approved combinations of funding and authority-to-spend other than state funds on a variety of existing and new units of the state park system. Much of that funding will directly affect historic sites and buildings or contribute to improved interpretation for visitation.

Bannack State Park, Beaverhead County, $368,000 (authority, only partial state funding), fire system, interpretation, building stabilization.

Parker Homestead, Jefferson County, $12,500, acquisition.

Pageville School, Madison County, $20,000, acquisition.

Ft. Owen State Monument, Ravalli County, $50,000, interpretation, stabilization, and land acquisition.

Chief Plenty Coups State Monument, Big Horn County, $38,000, site development.

Pictograph Cave State Monument, Yellowstone County, $40,000, site development.

Clark Rock, Beaverhead County, $40,739, acquisition.

Madison Buffalo Jump, Madison County, $5,000, interpretation.

Elkhorn State Monument, Jefferson County, $20,000, reroofing of two historic structures.

Giant Springs State Park, Cascade County, $75,000, site development.

Now on the Register

The following Montana properties have been listed in the National Register of Historic Places, in March and April 1983.

Carbon County

Red Lodge Commerical Historic District

Gallatin County

Emil Ketterer House, Bozeman

West Yellowstone Oregon Terminus Historic District

Kennedy Building, West Yellowstone

Madison Hotel and Cafe, West Yellowstone

Missoula County

Belmont Hotel, Missoula

Caring for Older Properties

Public Buildings, Wood Windows & Energy Conservation

Photos by Lon Johnson

The Big Horn County Courthouse in Hardin, left, exhibits infilling of openings left after removal of historic wooden windows, and placement of residential-scale new windows. In Philipsburg, the Granite County Courthouse, at right, retains its architectural integrity along with better thermal performance.

by Lon Johnson

The county courthouses and schools are often the most architecturally significant buildings in Montana communities. These buildings were constructed with pride as physical symbols of the prosperity and permanence of the county and of the citizens' concern for good government and the future of their children. In many instances, the courthouses and schools represent the city and county's finest achievements in professional design, superior craftsmanship, and the highest quality materials of the day.

Unfortunately, in the name of energy conservation, these buildings are undergoing dramatic change. The most widespread energy retrofit and also the most lethal of retrofit measures to the architectural integrity of these historic buildings are the changes to the historic windows. Often the solution to the problem of heat transference through the large and spacious windows significantly alters the historical architectural appearance of the building and is arrived at without a thorough knowledge or consideration of alternatives.

Windows are an important exterior design feature in most buildings — as representative of the architectural style of a building as classical pediments, domed rotundas, or art deco detailing. They reflect the original design intent of the architect, itself an investment that should not be overlooked. Too often, however, decisions are made which have a disastrous effect on the appearance of the entire building. Across the state, the top half of double hung windows are being covered with insulating panels or replaced with single sheets of reflecting glass, or original large window openings are being infilled with a variety of incongruous building materials such as concrete block, gravel-covered stucco, or glass block, sometimes with residential-scale windows floating in their midst.

We believe that many people do not realize how practical it is to rehabilitate their existing windows. Recent research has shown that wooden windows can be preserved with high thermal performance and at a cost less than many of the treatments now being used. See the chart for evaluation of a variety of window treatments. It can be seen that the addition of wooden storm windows or the installation of double glazing in the existing sash, the two least destructive solutions, are also the best approaches to increasing thermal performance.

For those persons considering energy conservation measures that might affect historic windows, the State Historic Preservation Office has a variety of useful information. Of particular interest is a National Park Service case study entitled: *Improving Thermal Efficiency: Historic Wooden Windows.* This booklet discusses the installation of interior storm windows on the Colcord Building in Oklahoma City. Also available is Preservation Brief #9: *The Repair of Historic Wooden Windows.*

WINDOW TYPE	U-VALUE*	APPROXIMATE COST (1 - 32"x64" window)
Existing wooden sash with single glazing	1.00	0
Aluminum framed replacement with double glazing, non-thermal break	.65	$300
Aluminum framed replacement with double glazing, thermal break	.62	$400
Existing wooden sash with exterior wooden storm and self-storing screen	.58	$ 75 plus installation
Existing wooden sash with double glazing	.50	$120 includes routing existing sash vinyl weatherstripping adjustment to sash weights new sash cords paint

*U-value is the coefficient of heat transmission of materials. The lower the number, the greater the insulating quality of the material.

The above information was obtained from a variety of sources including the National Park Service publication *Improving Thermal Efficiency: Historic Wooden Windows;* James R. McDonald, architect; *ASHRAE Fundamentals.*

GRANITE COUNTY—A CASE STUDY

In 1980, the Granite County Commissioners were faced with problems identical to those faced by commissioners across the state. Rising energy costs for the Courthouse and Jail were taking a larger and larger bite out of an already shrinking county budget. The Commissioners, equally concerned for the historic architectural characteristics of the two buildings in their responsibility, obtained the services of an architect experienced in the rehabilitation of historic buildings. Alterations and energy conservation treatments were considered, analyzed and compared to provide the Commissioners with the background necessary to make sound design decisions.

The Granite County Jail in Philipsburg is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. It was the first major public building constructed in Granite County after the county's creation in 1893. Designed and built by a local contractor, the building incorporates elements drawn from a spectrum of architectural styles. The classically-inspired Granite County Courthouse was constructed across the street from the Jail in 1912. It was designed by Montana's prolific architects of public buildings, Link and Haire. Both buildings retained almost complete architectural integrity when energy conservation measures were considered in 1980.

The Commissioners addressed two concerns with the rehabilitation of the Jail—current jail standards and energy conservation. For those

Lon Johnson

The Granite County Jail, Philipsburg, as it looks today after window weatherization that did not affect its 1893 design.

counties that feel new jail construction is the only alternative, it is interesting to note that the Granite County Jail, when compared to both old and new jails across the state, ranks in the top four that meet the national jail standards. The energy conservation measures undertaken in the jail rehabilitation included a new gas boiler with insulated pipes, attic and crawl space insulation, and new wooden sash fitted with insulating glass and weatherstripping in all existing window frames. In addition, rigid insulation board surfaced with drywall was placed on most exterior walls. This method of insulating involves the careful removal and replacement of all interior millwork but avoids a common retrofit mistake—the insulation of exterior wall cavities without the installation of a proper vapor barrier. Blowing insulation into wall cavities can cause long-term problems which are expensive to solve. The air space between interior and exterior wall surfaces allows for the dissipation of moisture as it is transferred through the walls. Adding insulation to the cavity of masonry walls can cause moisture to condense in the masonry resulting in spalling and deterioration when it freezes. In frame walls, the moisture can condense against the inner wall of the exterior siding, causing paint deterioration.

The energy conservation measures employed at the county courthouse involved only the installation of insulating glass in the existing sash and their weatherstripping.

Using the actual gas consumption for the two buildings in 1980 (prior to the retrofit) and 1982 (after the retrofit) and the degree heating days provided by the National Weather Service, we can determine the approximate gas consumption per degree heating day. Using the actual gas consumption at the Courthouse for 1982 of 1735 thousand-cubic-feet (MCF), minus a base load (hot water heating) of 25 MCF per month, times the Montana Power Company's rate of $4.682 per MCF, the heating bill for 1982 was $6719. Projecting the rate of consumption per degree day in 1980, gas consumption for heating in 1982 would have been approximately 1701 MCF at a cost of $7992. The heating cost savings for the courthouse with just the window work was approximately $1273.

Much more impressive are the energy consumption figures for the jail that combined the window work with other measures. Using the actual gas consumption for 1982 of 503.5 MCF, minus a base load of 23 MCF per month, times the Montana Power Company's rate of $4.682, the heating bill for 1982 was approximately $1065. Projecting the rate of consumption per degree heating day in 1980, gas consumption in 1982 would have been approximately 883.5 MCF at a cost of $4136. The savings in this instance is $3071. The total savings to Granite County for 1982 in both buildings was $4344, approximately equal to what it would have cost to heat the jail alone if no energy conservation measures had been installed.

Rehabilitation Grants Available

In March, President Reagan signed the Emergency Supplemental and Jobs Bill of 1983. The bill includes an amendment introduced by Montana's neighboring Senator James McClure (R-Idaho), appropriating $25 million in Historic Preservation Fund monies.

After a two-year restriction on the use of federal grants for actual rehabilitation work, the State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs) will again be able to assist such projects. Montana's share of the allocation is $404,565, available to owners of properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places, either individually or as part of an Historic District. If you are unsure of the status of your building, contact the SHPO. Historic districts are listed in the cities of Billings, Bozeman, Butte (including Walkerville), Fort Benton, Helena, Red Lodge, and Virginia City.

The Congressional intent of the funds is to produce construction jobs by sharing, on a minimum 50 per cent matching basis, the cost of rehabilitation work. The grants are subject to the following stipulations: (1) The State Historic Preservation Office must notify the National Park Service (NPS) by July 31 the total allocation it will be seeking. (2) The money must be obligated (contracts signed) by October 1. (3) All projects must be under construction by January 1, 1984. (4) Work must be complete by September 30, 1984, and all Federal funding outlayed by that date. (5) To the extent practicable, grant funds are to be used in a manner which maximizes immediate creation of new employment opportunities for the unemployed. (6) Property owners and/or leasees are required to certify that they have not used and will not use preservation tax incentives for the project being assisted by the grant.

The State Historic Preservation Office will be setting goals for use of the grants in the state and developing guidelines which will enable us to prioritize the applicants. In the near future, we will be mailing instructions on how to apply to all persons who have contacted us. Please submit inquiries in writing to the State Historic Preservation Office, Montana Historical Society, 225 North Roberts Street, Helena 59620.

Film, Film List Available From Preservation Office

The Preservation office has just received the National Trust for Historic Preservation's updated list of films and tape/slide shows on historic preservation. Subjects range from architectural history, historic house restoration, downtown commercial revitalization, museum interpretation, to archaeological investigations. Anyone may order these films directly from the filmmaker or through the State Interlibrary Loan system. A rental fee is sometimes charged, but most often the films are available for the cost of shipping only.

Recently the Preservation Office purchased a copy of *Main Street,* a 28-minute film about downtown revitalization and preservation of historic commercial buildings. This movie is available at no charge on request for showings in schools, at historical society meetings or to gatherings of downtown busines people.

Call or write the Preservation Office for a listing of currently available films and information on how to order.

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